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Safety

Research

Innovation

Integrity Management Program: OPS is promoting accelerated pipeline integrity testing, repair, and systematic risk identification through its new integrity management regulatory and oversight programs. More information on OPS's integrity management program is available at <http://primis.rspa.dot.gov/iim>

State Partners

States are the cornerstone of the Pipeline Safety Program. While the Federal government is responsible for developing, issuing, and enforcing pipeline safety regulations, the pipeline safety statutes allow for State assumption of the intrastate regulatory, inspection, and enforcement responsibilities through annual agreement with OPS. To qualify for certification, a state must adopt the minimum Federal regulations and may adopt additional or more stringent regulations as long as they are not incompatible. Additionally, States must also provide for injunctive and monetary sanctions substantially the same as those authorized by the pipeline safety statutes.

Damage Prevention

The leading cause of serious pipeline failure is third-party damage from activities related to construction near pipelines. For this reason, OPS invests considerable resources in damage prevention programs which include the following:

Common Ground—an enduring effort to identify and promote best practices for preventing damage to pipelines and other underground facilities. *Common Ground* participants continue to identify, refine, and foster best practices by serving as participants in the open forum of information exchange. You can learn more about the non-profit organization, *Common Ground* at www.commongroundalliance.com

Dig Safely—a national education and awareness campaign, aimed at facility operators, public works employees, contractors, and the general public. Launched in 1999 by OPS, *Dig Safely* stresses prevention of underground facilities damage and teaches the basics of safe excavation. Campaign materials are available for use in community, workplace, and public forums. For more information on OPS Damage Prevention programs, visit the OPS website at: <http://ops.dot.gov/damage.htm>

Research and Development

OPS's research plan identifies pipeline safety research priorities, initiates competitive processes to solicit research that meets identified needs, and funds contracts for the most promising research projects that quickly transfer technology to industry and to market. OPS is committed to leading the way in Federal pipeline research and development efforts, seeking innovative products that will improve pipeline safety in the areas of damage prevention and leak detection; enhanced operations, controls and monitoring; and improved material performance. For more information visit: <http://ops.dot.gov/research.htm>

How to Contact the Office of Pipeline Safety

Southern Region Office

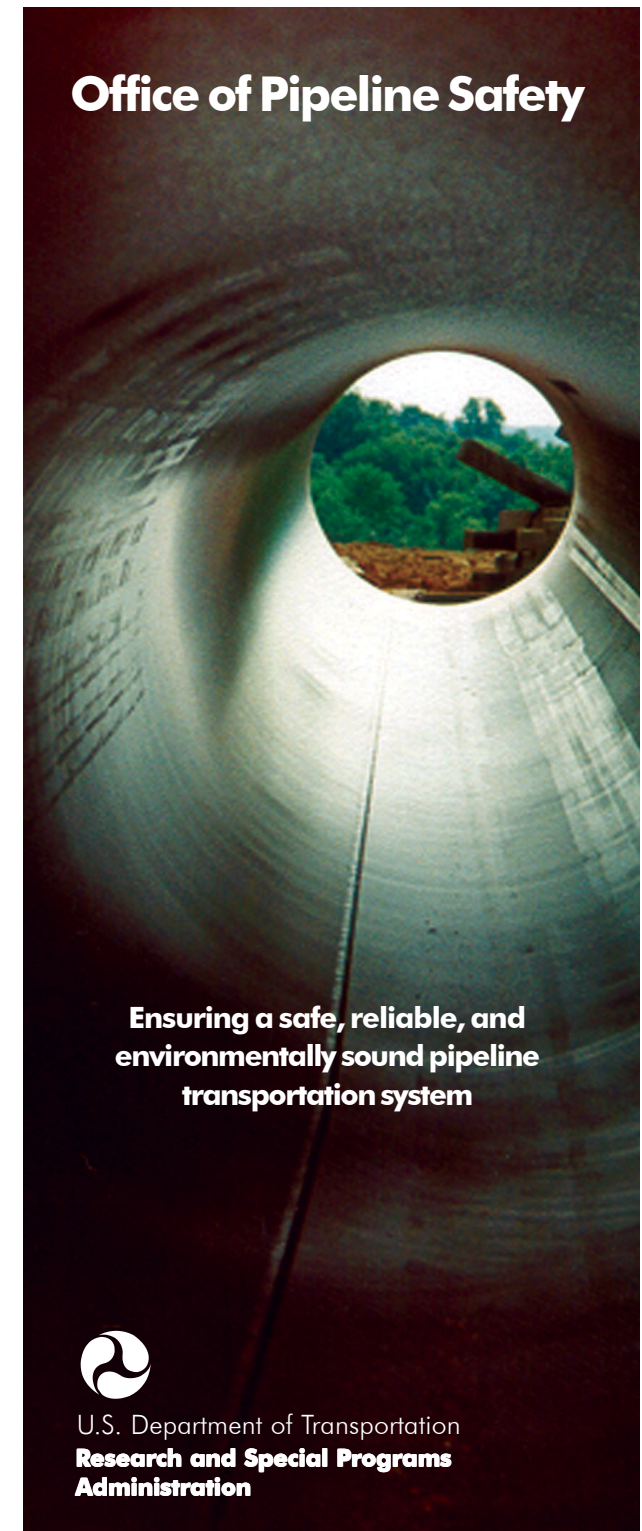
Research and Special
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U.S. Department of Transportation
Atlanta Federal Center
61 Forsyth Street, SW, Suite 16T15
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Southwest Region Office

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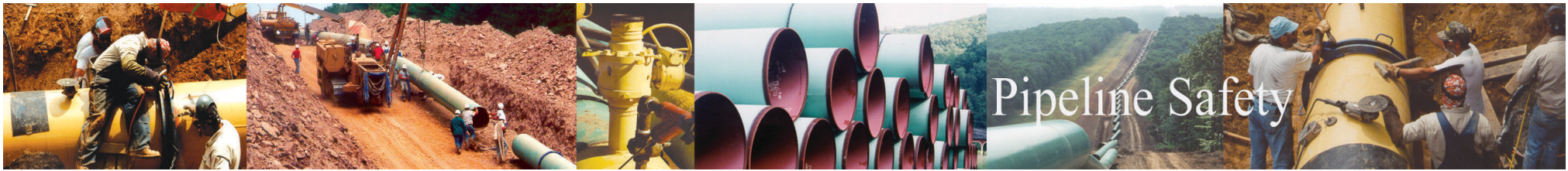
Office of Pipeline Safety



**Ensuring a safe, reliable, and
environmentally sound pipeline
transportation system**



U.S. Department of Transportation
**Research and Special Programs
Administration**



Pipeline Safety

Who We Are

The Office of Pipeline Safety (OPS), part of the U.S. Department of Transportation's Research and Special Programs Administration (RSPA), regulates and oversees the safe operation of the Nation's two million mile energy pipeline system. OPS remains committed to educating communities and industry in pipeline damage prevention and to supporting the development of improved technologies to monitor the condition of underground lines. OPS's broader mission is to create an environment that encourages industry to continuously improve the safety and environmental performance of pipeline operations.

Objective

To ensure the safe, reliable and environmentally sound operation of America's pipeline transportation system.

What We Do

- Develop pipeline safety regulations and , safety standards for pipeline design, construction, operation and maintenance, and emergency response through rulemakings and national consensus standards organizations;
- Inspect natural gas and hazardous liquid operators for compliance with the regulations and investigate accidents in cooperation with our State partners;
- Sponsor pipeline technological research to ensure effective and efficient solutions to pipeline integrity problems;

- Train Federal and State pipeline safety inspectors and pipeline industry employees;
- Sponsor programs to prevent accidental damage and instruct the public to dig safely;
- Provide the public with information on pipeline safety and environmental performance; and
- Respond to inquiries on pipeline regulations, safety and environmental issues.

Our Customers

- The Public
- Regional, state, and local governments
- Natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline operators
- Trade associations
- Safety and environmental organizations

Programs and Initiatives

OPS promotes pipeline safety by focusing on prevention and mitigation of the greatest risks posed to the national pipeline infrastructure. Pipeline failures are generally attributed to four causes:

1. outside force damage;
2. corrosion;
3. material defect; or
4. human error.

OPS requires risk-based approaches to ensure that pipeline operators effectively protect their systems from these and other causes of failure. OPS has numerous long term initiatives for continuous improvement of pipeline safety and reliability. The key themes common to all of our work are a commitment to public safety, technological innovation, information exchange, and stakeholder involvement. Together, these programs address every aspect of pipeline operations and the concerns of everyone affected.

Regulations and Enforcement

OPS uses performance-based, value-added approaches to regulatory development to ensure continued protection of public safety and the environment. The current safety record demonstrates that pipelines are the safest way to transport petroleum and natural gas, but this record can still be improved. OPS has initiated a variety of programs to further promote and ensure public safety and environmental protection.

Regulatory Compliance: Current Federal pipeline regulations, contained in Title 49 of the Code of Federal Regulations Parts 190-199, ensure safety in design, construction, inspection, testing, operation, and maintenance of natural gas and hazardous liquid pipeline facilities.

How to Contact the Office of Pipeline Safety

Headquarters

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